

## **The Barnes & Barnes Neck Reliever**

### **Cross-Reference to Related Application**

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This is a continuation-in-part of co-pending Serial No. 10/213,198, filed August 5, 2002.

### **Background of the Invention**

The present invention relates to an apparatus that provides the user of a seat belt  
10 shoulder strap with greater comfort than provided by the prior art.

### **Brief Summary of the Invention**

The present invention (the Barnes & Barnes seat belt shoulder strap Neck Reliever)  
has been specifically designed for the sole purpose of providing the user with dramatically  
15 increased comfort. As a result the Neck Reliever encourages greater use of seat belt shoulder  
straps since one of the major reasons for their non-use is the discomfort afforded by standard  
seat belt shoulder strap arrangements.

### **Detailed Description of the Invention**

The flexibility of the Neck Reliever results in a lack of hazardous edges or corners  
20 that could cause injury or penetrate the body in an accident. It has been found that the use of  
the Neck Reliever prototype provides a decided advantage in safety in that it will, if adjusted  
according to the instructions, hold the shoulder strap flat, i.e. sideways, against the neck  
instead of the normal position. The normal position for the shoulder strap is lying flat on the  
shoulder thereby presenting a cutting edge similar to a sharp knife against the neck. The  
25 shoulder strap in its normal position under the pressure resulting from an automobile accident  
can, and has according to news reports, caused decapitation of users.

Although it would be difficult to adequately quantify the degree of comfort to one  
using the Neck Reliever, all users tested reported increased comfort compared to a standard

seat belt shoulder strap arrangement.

Instructions for using the present invention, referring to Figs. 7-12:

1. Insert the top of the lap seatbelt into flap A. (This side of the Neck Reliever will be against the stomach of the user.)
- 5 2. Insert the bottom of the lap seatbelt into flap B.
3. Insert the shoulder strap of the seatbelt into flap C. (This side of the Neck Reliever will be on the outside.)

Adjust the Neck Reliever to a comfortable position for the shoulder strap.

The present invention is a unitary shoulder strap neck reliever for a seatbelt having  
10 two straps, comprising a base with a front side and a back side, said base including an H-shaped slit having a left opening and a right opening, and a clip spaced apart from and connected to said base substantially parallel to the base and defining a strap holding area therebetween, wherein said base and said clip are non-releasably attached. Advantageously the shoulder strap neck reliever further comprises a first strap threaded into said left opening  
15 and passing along the back side of the base and threaded out through said right opening, and a second strap clipped into said strap holding area. Preferably said first strap is a shoulder strap and said second strap is a lap strap. Alternatively said first strap is a lap strap and said second strap is a shoulder strap. Advantageously any slack present in the strap can be pulled from said shoulder strap and wrapped around said clip.

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